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ABSTRACT

Historically, the education of some slaves established a middle class within the black population. By the beginning of the 19th century many ex-slaves were able to establish their own business enterprises, using the skills learned. This skilled group became the proponents of freedom for their people and participated in the establishment of schools for black children. Funds from various sources helped support the institutionalization of the freedmen's educational system. Common schools were first established, then high schools, and by 1868, the school system was virtually completed. As the school system stabilized, so did the methods and programs of instruction, and soon it became apparent that higher education institutions were needed in order to supply more teachers. Blacks played a large role in the establishment of free public schools through their participation in politics. As opportunities for political participation declined, black faith in formal education grew, and the school population increased. Although the move to equalize educational opportunity for black people extends from the 1880's the fight to desegregate began in 1935 and led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A little more than a century ago, it was illegal to educate blacks, and today black people are still struggling to enjoy the basic right to a quality education that all other Americans enjoy. (Author/AM)

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THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

A Way Out of Bondage

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Black people have struggled for quality education during their more than 300 years in America, first as slaves, then as segregated persons, and now.

From where did black people get their burning desire for education? Actually, it is no accident that blacks today see hope for survival and development in education. Africans were among the earliest builders of great civilizations. From as far back as pre-history in Thebes, there was much temple building. Many of these temples were what we today call colleges. It was to African Thebes that scholars from foreign lands came to study. It was from African Thebes that religious ideas and architectural designs spread abroad. The ancient religion of Thebes gave birth to science, art, engineering, architecture, economics, and politics. It gave birth also to history, writing, music, medicine, dance, philosophy, and astrology.

Also in Africa, in a town called Memphis, during the pre-dynastic period of about 4500 B.C., stone was first used in building, hieroglyphic writing was invented, the great pyramids were built, and stone quarrying perfected.

Likewise, learning flourished among the blacks of West Africa. One of the principal centers of learning was Timbuktu, the Sudanese metropolis. At the head of the educational system at Timbuktu was the world famous University of Sankore, the center of intellectual life. Students from all West Africa and scholars from Asian and European countries traveled to the University of Sankore because it contained large and valuable collections of manuscripts in several languages.

It is no wonder then, that laws were passed making it a crime to teach slaves to read, since whites were dealing with a people who traditionally had a passion for learning. If slaves had been able to read, they would have read the Constitution which embraces the tenets of freedom and liberty and seen the inconsistencies in the nation's behavior. They would have read the Declaration of Independence and recognized it as a contradiction in practice. Blacks would have read newspaper accounts of insurrections and seen the advertisements for the numerous escaped slaves and more of them would have revolted than did. They would have read the slave narratives and *David Walker's Appeal to the Colored People of the World*, published in pamphlet form in 1829. This fine piece of literature, written by a black man, called for black men to revolt and murder their owners. It frightened whites so much that they pushed for new laws to restrict blacks in ever increasing ways. So, by and large, slaves were kept illiterate as a mechanism of control. But some slaves learned to read anyway, as education went underground. In some cases, slaveowners taught their most favored slaves. As an outgrowth of this relationship between slaves and slaveholders, many household slaves were taught to be carpenters, artisans, blacksmiths, weavers, seamstresses, construction workers, and machinists. In fact, blacks used all of the opportunities to become literate in their new world that the indulgence and permissiveness of some slaveholders afforded them. Moreover, the education of some blacks was provided for in the wills of their slaveholders. The skills obtained by blacks increased their worth in the slave markets.

As the practice of training household slaves grew, trained slaves exceeded the number needed by one householder. As a consequence, trained slaves were hired out to other employers who needed them. Thus, the practice of educating blacks within a system whose laws made it a crime to do so had been established.

In addition, in spite of laws forbidding the practice, many slave children were taught to read by their white playmates while others secretly taught themselves to read from spelling books. Some large planters established Sunday Schools as a means of implanting obedience through religious education. It was also the feeling of some religious leaders that literacy would save the system of slavery rather than stimulate revolt.

As early as 1620, when the slave trade began, English clergymen had expressed an interest in extending religious training to slaves. Approximately one hundred years later, the Presbyterians gave formal training to blacks in an effort to develop religious leadership among those in

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Charleston, South Carolina, in 1740 and in Virginia in 1755. One, John Chavis, a black of North Carolina, was sent to Princeton University and later became a teacher of white children in the South.

Other religious groups also established schools for slaves. Nevertheless, educating slaves was by no means a universal practice under the slave system. Generally, education was a privilege sometimes gained by household servants or by free blacks.

This education of slaves was to betray the intentions of those who engaged in it, for education was to become a means of blacks liberating themselves. As an outgrowth of this practice of educating some slaves, a middle class was established within the black population as more and more slaves became educated and subsequently manumitted. Consequently, many ex-slaves were able to establish their own business enterprises using the skills learned. By the beginning of the 19th Century, this skilled group became the proponents of freedom for their people.

Many blacks participated in the establishment of schools for black children. In the North, blacks themselves established a school in Boston in 1800 and employed two Harvard University men as instructors. The school continued until Boston opened an elementary school for blacks in 1820. Miss Deaveaux, a black educator, taught a private school since 1838 in secret and eluded slaveholders for more than a quarter of a century. Mrs. Mary D. Price established a school in New Orleans in 1858. Another pioneer black teacher was Mrs. Mary Peake, who set up a school in 1861. Hers was the first black school of the South to have the legal authority and protection of Union guns. Later, Miss L. Humphrey established an evening school in 1862 and developed many black teachers for the emergency schools set up for the freedmen.

Educated blacks spoke against slavery in their speeches and published works. They provided leadership in insurrection after insurrection. A few in this category were Denmark Vesey, David Walker, William Wells Brown, and Frederick Douglass.

During the Civil War and Reconstruction, masses of blacks began moving from the plantations into the cities. Thus, the Emancipation Proclamation, which became final on January 1, 1863, simply caused more bondsmen to seek the protection of the invading Union forces. This concentration of refugees within Union lines precipitated immediate official action since it hampered military operations. Therefore, General W.T. Sherman and other generals made public appeals for organized emergency help for the recently freed slaves. The appeals emphasized providing for physical wants and the establishment of a system of instruction to enable blacks to support and govern themselves.

Benevolent societies were established in some cities in the North and Midwest in 1862 to provide clothing, food, money, religious leaders, and teachers for the freedmen. These benevolent societies and church organizations established a freedmen's school system.

As an outgrowth of this activity, Congress created an agency in March, 1865, called the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands to centralize the responsibility of caring for the freedmen. This agency, which became known as the Freedmen's Bureau, was located within the War Department and the President appointed General O. Howard as its first commissioner. This effort gave official backing to the establishment of a complete school system for the freedmen.

The freedmen themselves contributed $672,989 in taxes and tuition through the Freedmen's Bureau and donated approximately $500,000 through their church organizations. Also, despite their poverty, 1867 records show that freedmen of Louisiana, Tennessee, and Virginia had entirely supported 46 schools, had contributedot the support of 42 others, and had purchased 33 buildings through their own resources.

Funds from the benevolent societies, religious groups, and from blacks with some money grew larger and helped to support the institutionalization of the freedmen's educational system. First, common schools were established, then high schools came into being as the school movement gained momentum, so that by 1868 the school system was virtually completed. By 1869, the regular school attendance in the freedmen's schools had reached over one hundred thousand black children at great sacrifice to their families who could have used their labor on the farm to help produce food for their families. This kind of sacrifice was quite common among destitute blacks who believed that education was their own hope for survival.

Higher Education

As the school system stabilized, so, too, did the methods and programs of instruction. Individualized instruction according to the needs of each pupil evolved into groupings around reading levels. The curriculum was a classical one which emphasized reading, writing, grammar, geography, and arithmetic with some attention paid to industrial arts for boys and needlework for girls.

It soon became apparent that higher education institutions needed to be established in order to supply more teachers. Thus, the Freedmen's Bureau attempted to meet this need by influencing the establishment of normal schools for the training of teachers. Also, it became evident that preachers, doctors, lawyers and other professionals were needed. Therefore, a system of colleges and universities was established by white benevolent societies aided by the Freedmen's Bureau. Out of the movement came the establishment in 1865 of Fisk University, Talladega College, Atlanta University, Virginia Union University, Morehouse College, Shaw University, Meharry Medical College, and Claflin University. Hampton Institute was established in 1867. Most of these colleges were offering high school work during this period. A true university, Howard University, was also established in Washington,

D.C., in 1868 for those blacks ready for collegiate and professional training.

Freedmen's schools were not established without opposition from southerners. President Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction Policy and government and community pressures forced many schools to close down. Black codes were enacted in southern states which were as restrictive and venomous as the Slave Codes. Local governors closed schools. Strict certification laws were used to force northern teachers out of the southern communities. Black religious leaders were forced to denounce northern teachers. Schools were shot into. Some were burned and stoned. Oftimes teachers were refused places to live. In some states blacks were taxed to support black schools because public money was used to educate only white children. Both school children and teachers were exposed to mob violence. Also, many blacks lost their jobs if they went to school. Nonetheless, blacks persisted in their pursuit of education.

Fortunately, Congress opposed the Johnson Plan to re-enslave blacks and passed a new Freedmen's Bureau bill over the President's veto, extending the life of the agency and enlarging its authority. In addition, Congress passed over Presidential veto, a civil rights act that made blacks citizens of the United States.

The Establishment of Free Public Schools

It is ironic that those who were systematically denied educational opportunity became the impetus for establishing free public schools in the South.

Blacks played a large role in the establishment of free public schools through their participation in politics. Not only did more blacks register to vote than whites in some southern states, but a number of outspoken black delegates attended the state conventions. Working together, they managed to get an article on public education into the constitution of many states.

Several problems arose, however. For one, white property owners were opposed to a free public school system because they could afford to pay tuition to send their children to school and felt that the white laboring class did not need education. The laboring class also felt that education was for the propertied class. Problems also arose over the question of compulsory attendance and mixed schools.

Nevertheless, free public education was established primarily due to the efforts of blacks. Even though the legislature of each southern state passed a law establishing a free public school system, serious difficulties were encountered. Some problems centered around the lack of trained teachers and administrators, failure of white citizens to pay taxes, the lack of a tradition of paying taxes in support of schools, the fear of mixed schools, the diverting of school funds to other purposes, insults and social ostracism and threats of injury suffered by teachers in black schools. Despite these problems, many of the southern states capitalized on the Freedmen's school system.

It is not surprising to note that in many of the southern states black enrollment of the schools was larger than white enrollment and blacks attended more regularly. Also, during the period of 1868 to 1871, blacks attended the state normal schools in greater numbers than did whites. Here again we see black faith in education manifested.

The Ku Klux Klan used violence and intimidation to eliminate blacks from politics because they felt threatened by, among other things, the contributios which blacks had made in the establishment of free public education in every southern state.

The year 1877 saw more and more federal withdrawal from the South. Unsupported promises by southern governors that they would respect the laws and would provide a system of equal public education freed the South from northern intervention in southern race relations. Blacks were abandoned by the federal government. Most citizenship gains and civil and personal liberties were wiped out and a new order of segregated and curtailed life sanctioned by law was established.

Thus began the one hundred years of physical and mental strangulation of the thoughts and actions of black people. All types of barriers were erected to deny blacks equal quality educational opportunities. Out of all this flourished the notion of special education for blacks propounded by General S.C. Armstrong, founder of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute for Negro Youth. This special "industrial" education eliminated the liberal and classical education model established by northern missionaries during the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. It was an attempt to relegate black people to a lowly position in life. Booker T. Washington, Armstrong's strongest supporter, spread his educational philosophy throughout the country. Washington later applied this industrial education philosophy at Tuskegee Institute where he managed through the integrating of theory with practice to break down the resistance of black students and their parents to incorporating work with study. To emphasize this Washington would say, "An ounce of application is worth a ton of abstraction."

Washington's influence was widespread. In fact, because of his educational philosophy which emphasized industrial training rather than liberal education, and his acceptance of segregation as a system, he became popular with many philanthropic whites. As Tuskegee began to turn out docile domestics and farmers, white opposition to the school disappeared. Thus, we had a black school run by a black man but owned and supported by white philanthropy. The same type of education advocated by Booker T. Washington was also present in the land-grant colleges, created by the Morrell Act of 1890. This Second Morrell Act was the first means of assuring land-grant funds for blacks. It also gave strength to the "separate but equal" doctrine in the seventeen southern states. In these land-grant colleges blacks learned trades such as bricklaying, shoemaking, painting, home economics, farming and mechanical training. Needless to

say, Booker T. Washington's educational philosophy of special education met opposition from many black leaders. One who challenged his concept was W.E.B. DuBois who propounded a philosophy of "classical" black education to prepare a black leadership class. This he and others did at Fisk and Atlanta Universities, both liberal arts schools.

Carter G. Woodson, founder of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, supported DuBois. He, too, believed that black students should be well-grounded in African and Afro-American history, economics, and sociology. In his book, *The Miseducation of the American Negro*, he made clear that it may be of no importance to the race to boast of how many times as many 'educated' members it has today than it had in 1865. He believed that if these educated persons were of the wrong kind, the increases in numbers would be a disadvantage. The reason he gave was that the economics, history, and philosophy taught the students stemmed from a Eurocentric base and were only a group of rationales for the caste system in America, which allowed no black man, however brilliant, rich, or good, to rise above even the poorest, dirtiest, meanest, and most non-intellectual white.

As time passed, and the support of free public schools became a burden on the tax capabilities of the southern states, whites sought ways of diverting funds from black schools. This they did through certification requirements, a reduction in the school term, and a philosophy that special "industrial" education for blacks did not require as much money s liberal education for whites. Thus, by the end of the 19th Century, the "separate but unequal" concept was firmly established in the South.

Separate and Unequal

As the idea of special education for blacks began to spread, both northern white and southern black leaders began to salvage what they could and built an accommodationist educational structure on the principle of white supremacy. A strategy of compromise was proposed at the Conference for Education in the South which opened on June 29, 1898. Among the founders of this organization were Hollis Frissell, president of Hampton Institute, the Reverend A.B. Hunter, president of St. Augustine's College at Raleigh, North Carolina; Dr. D.J. Satterfield of Scotia Seminary at Concord, North Carolina; Dr. Julius D. Dreher of Roanoke College in Virginia; Professor Charles F. Meserve of Shaw University, Raleigh, North Carolina; Reverend George F. Fairchild of Berea College in Kentucky, and Wilbur F. Thirkfield of Gammon Theological Seminary at Atlanta. Through their discussions they arrived at a philosophy for black education that was acceptable to both the North and the South. Whites would be provided for first and the masses of southern blacks would receive an industrial education. With these as its major goals, the Conference for Education in the South became the dominant education force in that section of the country.

At its fourth convocation of April, 1901, it appointed a seven-member executive board empowered to campaign for free schools for all the people. This board took the name, "Southern Education Board", and was consulted on practically all educational policies from where to make philanthropic contributions to the selection of teachers, building schools, and curricula matters. Thus, education in the South became organized so that by the time of the ninth conference held at Lexington, Kentucky, on May 2, 1906, a change in the southern attitude toward public education could be seen. Whites were more willing to accept self-imposed taxation for the purpose of financing education for their children. Weak schools were consolidated to make stronger ones. Plans for teacher improvement were made. Improvements were also made in curricula. Libraries were more adequately funded. In fact, even racial differentials in expenditures became smaller. In spite of all this though, blacks had lost the bid for equality of educational opportunity.

By the close of the 19th Century, the country was more urbanized and industrialized. And since industrial education was thought of as the black way toward education, the white industrial giants of the country gave a portion of their wealth for philanthropic efforts toward this end. Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller, George F. Peabody, Julius Rosenwald, John F. Slater, Robert C. Ogden, William Henry Baldwin, and Anna T. Jeanes aided black education within the confines of the special education concept. Even at black liberal arts colleges, the money was used maily for the establishment and maintenance of industrial departments. Consequently, this vast philanthropic movement contributed greatly to the establishment of a limited world of work for blacks which concretized their position at the bottom rungs of the work ladder. By the mid-1930s the South's system of black education was complete. The pattern of inferior education was established. So, too, was the pattern of negativism toward blacks rather firmly estblished legally and in practice.

Despite these seemingly universal efforts to anchor the future of blacks in industrial education, classical studies in many black schools and colleges persisted. It had to. Blacks needed teachers in their microcosmic world. They needed preachers. They needed other trained leaders for the insurance companies and newspaper establishments. They needed physicians, dentists, businessmen, nurses and undertakers in their confined societies. So the colleges emphasized a curriculum much more literary than industrial. Therefore, while education for blacks was separate but unequal, it was in effect the same kind of education offered to white children.

As opportunities for political participation declined, black faith in formal education grew and their numbers increased in schools. The literacy gap between whites and blacks began to close. For instance, there were approximately 70% or over three million black school age children enrolled in school in fourteen southern states in 1929 as compared to 57% of the black school age

population enrolled in school in these states in 1915. Because of this recognition of the importance of education, it became evident to black leaders that there were racial differentials in shorter school terms, laid at the door of farming needs; inadequate financing that accompanied the shorter school terms, resulting in meager salaries; inadequate equipment; inferior facilities and inadequate training for black teachers. It was also recognized that industrial and agricultural education for blacks gave no promise of financial security. It also became clear that whites were not ready to accept educated blacks in any capacity. They were looking for dependent sharecroppers. Clear, too, was the fact that formal education in the South did not bring blacks closer to the ballot box. Three types of efforts denied them this right — the poll tax, the property tax, and the literacy test. Blacks owned property, many had money and quite a few were educated, but they were still restricted from voting. With the turn of the century, disillusionment and discontent reigned among blacks. Thus, their aspiration for first-class citizenship was revived. They took to the platforms and through scholarly works communicated this discontent.

The negative treatment of blacks in and after World War I also contributed to their discontent with their caste status in America. In spite of being college educated, many blacks could only obtain jobs as pullman porters, waiters, school teachers in all black public schools or as professionals in the black community. Nevertheless, black adults looked upon education as their salvation and continued sacrificing to send their children to public or private schools and on through college. Even when they themselves had only completed elementary school, they infused their children with the idea that education was the way to succeed in America. During this time, also, blacks mounted protest actions of many kinds gainst the use of derogatory terms, the use of the small 'n' when spelling Negro, racial epithets, and the denial of the use of proper salutations for addressing blacks.

The new mood was one of challenge, not compromise, as could be seen in the great

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literary, historical, and scholarly writings of such greats as Charles Thompson, educator; Monroe Trotter, publisher; W.E.B. DuBois, sociologist; James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, poets; Carter G. Woodson, Charles H. Wesley, William S. Savage, Luther P. Jackson, Benjamin Quarles, Lorenzo Green, Rayford Logan, and Merle Eppse, historians; Alain Locke, E. Franklin Frazier, Charles Johnson, Ira De A. Reid, Bertram Doyle, Oliver Cox, Allison Davis, sociologists; Ralph Bunche, political scientist, and many others. Practically all of this literature originated within the black colleges and appeared in scholarly and literary journals throughout the country. Much of it was used in black colleges and influenced blacks to continue the struggle for liberation and education.

Numerous protest organizations came into existence as college-bred blacks multiplied. DuBois' influence was a strong one during this time as he fought discrimination. Action groups were formed. The National Association of Colored Women in the United States directed its efforts against lynchings. The Niagara Movement chose as its target all barriers to first-class citizenship. It was the forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which was founded in May, 1909. The Urban League, founded in New York in 1910, worked to create employment opportunities for urban blacks. Blacks were beginning to reorganize to help themselves.

Other efforts were also made to equalize educational opportunities for black people. As early as 1885 blacks were using the courts in this effort. In Arkansas, they petitioned the state supreme court to provide schools for the education of black children. In Richmond County, Georgia, blacks forced the state courts to enjoin the school board from appropriating money for a high school for white children when there was none for black children. In Kernersville, North Carolina, blacks forced the school trustees to establish graded schools for black children. Mississippi courts in 1909 forced the school board to provide educational facilities for black children since a special tax was levied for the support and maintenance of white youths. The Supreme Court of North Carolina gave similar support to the maintenance of schools for blacks in connection with the purchase of school bonds. This fight continued well into the 19th and 20th Centuries. Larger group efforts became possible through the NAACP. As the organization grew stronger, it launched a legal campaign in 1936 to equalize the salaries of black and white public school teachers in fifteen of the seventeen southern states maintaining separate schools for the races. By the end of 1941, the NAACP had won almost half of its cases. And seven years later, almost all of its 38 cases had been won.

Many school districts avoided early compliance with the Court's decision by using various subterfuges allowed by its "all deliberate speed" doctrine. They delayed desegregation until a study of methods of complying was made. Some insisted on an upgrading of black teachers. Others wanted to wait until building plans were completed. In some cases, violent actions on the part of whites were used as delaying tactics, including the dissemination of hate literature. More extreme action took the form of standing in the school house door as did Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus in Little Rock.

The Push for Desegregation

The fight to test the "separate but equal" doctrine began in June, 1935 in Maryland, a border state, in the case of "Donald G. Murray vs. The University of Maryland." Murray, a black man, was refused admittance to the law school. The

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usual loopholes devised by other southern states, namely, (1) the authorization to establish a law school for blacks and, (2) adequate scholarship money to provide scholarships for black applicants for study in other states where the courses they sought were taught, were not available in Maryland. At the time of this case, Maryland had only $200 in its out-of-state scholarship grant program. The NAACP won its case and the University of Maryland was required to admit Murray.

In Mississippi, the case of Lloyd Gaines was instrumental in outlawing out-of-state scholarships as a device for meeting the "separate but equal" doctrine because, the court ruled, providing out-of-state scholarships was not the same as furnishing equal facilities. Ten years later, in the case of "Sipuel vs. Board of Education," the United States Supreme Court ruled that Oklahoma was compelled to provide for the plaintiff, and all others similarly situated, not only equal opportunity to begin the study of law at a state institution, but an opportunity to begin at the same time as other citizens. Thus, Miss Sipuel was admitted to the law school of the University of Oklahoma in 1949.

The legal precedent that had been so firmly planted in the Murray and Gaines cases was reinforced in the case of "Sweatt vs. Painter." In this 1947 case the court ruled that in no way could a three-room law school established in Houston be equal to the law school at the University of Texas. Furthermore, the court ruled in the case of George McLawin that once a school admits a student, it must give him the same rights and privileges given other students. Therefore, by 1950, the NAACP had virtually ended segregation of graduate and professional education.

Now the NAACP moved into the arena of segregation in public schools with the case of "Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka." The issue was that segregation and of itself was damaging to black children. In this regard, Kenneth B. Clark, a black psychologist and professor at the City College of New York, contributed a forceful statement to the brief. So, here again, blacks were instrumental in helping themselves by crushing the segregated public school policy through their social scientists, psychologist and lawyers who studied primarily in black colleges and universities and were to bring their knowledge to bear on the problem. Thus, they were able to score on May 17, 1954 the Supreme Court decision abolishing legal public school segregation in the South and the country.

What did this decision actually mean in terms of the education of black children? For one, it meant that bordeer states complied first because it was easiest for them to do so. Also, with the exception of Baltimore, the District of Columbia, and Wilmington, Delaware, black students comprised a relatively small proportion of the student population. In many instances, careful step-by-step plans were prepared and implemented. Also, population shifts prevented serious problems, for whites scurried to the suburban areas to avoid sending their children to school with black children. Likewise, free-choice policies in some communities like Baltimore left the system pretty much as segregated as before the Supreme Court decision.

South Carolina devised a pupil placement law assigning studentsto schools to which they were "best suited." Georgia passed laws making it a felony for a school official to spend money for public schools in which the races were mixed. Mississippi amended the state constitution to provide for the abolition of public schools. South Carolina repealed compulsory school attendance laws. Alabama discontinued public schools to avoid friction or disorder. Prince Edward County, Virginia, in complete defiance of the court, closed her schools in 1959 and spent $2 million to support a white students' private academy. It was not until May 25, 1964, ten years after the Court's decision, that Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black directed Prince Edward County to reopen its public schools.

As far as higher education was concerned, most colleges and universities in southern states had opened their doors to blacks by 1956. And by 1961, over half of the 285 tax-supported institutions of higher learning in the South were desegregated. Naturally, the principle worked in reverse at all black colleges. For instance, one-half of the students enrolled at Lincoln University are white and West Virginia State College has a predominantly white student body.

As of 1963, black Americans had spent over 30 years in court litigations in an effort to gain equality of educational opportunity. Obviously, litigation was inadequate for the sustained resistance of whites against desegregation or equality of opportunity for blacks. What it did reveal, however, was the weakness of the Federal Government's commitment to support court decisions. But, a single act by a tired black woman waas to usher in a new era. Rosa Parks, a black lady, got fed up with the effort and precipitated the Montgomery bus boycott. Consequently, nonviolent direct action, street demonstrations and boycotts led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who was educated at Morehouse, a black college, became the order of the day.

Black education became the leverage to change the American social order as students took the lead in moving from compromise in education to one of confrontation. Spontaneously, a sit-in was started in 1960 by four black students from North Carolina's Agricultural and Technical College at Greensboro. Students sat in at a Woolworth's five-and-ten-cent store and refused to leave until they were served. The spontaneity of their action caught American society offguard and the movement quickly spread to other cities across the nation.

On Easter Sunday in 1960 at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came into being. This organization was a large, loose coalition of black students formed to keep black students abreast of the movement in an effort to give support to the student activists fighting against segregation and discrimination.

Some 70,000 students in 20 states across the nation participated in the sit-in campaign. By the end of 1961, the freedom rides and the sit-ins forced white Americans to accept a new image of black people, a people who were no longer willing to wait patiently for change. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the NAACP also aided the students in the protest movement. Meanwhile, brilliant leadership had been provided by the black colleges. Black professionals, including alumni, some residents and professors of black colleges, vigorously supported the students' efforts. The reaction by black students broke the back of southern resistance. More importantly, the demonstrations brought about more rapid and lasting changes in the South than 30 years of litigation had done.

These efforts subsequently led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Nevertheless, passage of the bill did not end the fight. Resegregation was on the move. Other more sophisticated ploys were designed to deny blacks equal access to meaningful employment and open housing rights. Thus, discontent spawned of frustration flared anew. Consequently, the Black Power movement found fertile ground and Stokely Carmichael, its most articulate advocate, became a hero.

The Black Power Movement

With the explosion of the concept of Black Power in 1966, black students began grappling with the question of how to make their education meaningful to the black community. Black students began to seriously discuss educational reform, they talked about an education which would provide them with tools that would enable them to return to their communities and be of service.

Unfortunately, some black college officials refused to listen to the students. At Alcorn A & M College, officials called in the Mississippi State Police. In 1967 police were also called to Tennessee A & I College in Nashville, and Fisk University. By the end of the year, violent rebellions had occurred at over 15 schools in the South: Tuskegee, Texas Southern, Southern University in Louisiana, South Carolina State College, and Howard University among them. In each instance, black students expressed a desire to restructure the curricula of the university to allow them to learn skills which would benefit the black community and to end the isolation of the college from the community.

1967 also saw black students in northern, midwestern and western universities forming Black Student Unions, Afro-American Societies and Black Student Associations. These organizations began to raise questions about the relevance of their educational experiences to the needs of black people. At Columbia University, San Francisco State, the University of Chicago, and many other schools of higher education, they fought for the right to influence decisions on the nature and quality of their education.

When Richard M. Nixon took office as President, the national mood began to change. College presidents began to respond to student demands by calling for punitive measures against those involved in campus unrest. This turn of events made black students aware that new strategies were needed if they were to thwart oppression. One answer to this was the formation of a National Association of Black Students where black students could begin to formulate positive programs to deal with such problems as (1) the isolation of black college students from one another in southern colleges, (2) the isolation of black students in the large universities, and, (3) irrelevant educational programs.

Most of the major white universities established Black Studies programs. Many have since folded but some still function. Some are degree-granting programs while others are a smattering of elective courses. Some programs have been described by the students involved as useless. Others complain that the major problem with the program is its lack of critical analysis.

Nathan Hare, one of the early directors of a Black Studies Program, writing in the September, 1970 issue of *The Black Scholar*, had this to say: "A black studies curriculum must include race analysis, class analysis, and the study of the oppressor as well as his black victims. There must be a study of the march toward freedom of other peoples in other eras and other lands — why they succeeded, their failures, an analysis of their goals and strategy, their tactics. Beyond this, no black studies program should be without some study of the use and methods of the apparatus of publishing and propaganda, just as it is folly to ommit technical skills (mathematics, engineering, medicine) taught from a black perspective in, of, and by the black community."

The Race Relations Reporter of April 5, 1971 reported that in 1968, a number of undergraduate Black Studies programs in colleges and universities were funded by the Ford Foundation, the nation's largest private philanthropic organization. During 1968-70, the Ford Foundation or its subsidiaries allocated over $3 million to institutions for Black Studies programs. This money was considered to be "start-up" funds to get the programs under way. Beginning in the 1971-72 school year, the Ford Foundation announced it would no longer fund undergraduate Blck Studies programs. Its new thrust was (1) to fund programs designed to train scholars on the graduate level to direct or teach in the already established programs and (2) to fund programs of other ethnic minorities.

Unfortunately, the Foundation's new thrust left undergraduate colleges in a dilemma since few seemed able or willing to continue their programs without outside financial support. This led many educators involved in these programs to wonder about the Foundation's commitment to Black Studies. Others believed that its original involvement was a pacification measure to quiet and tame black students.

Early in the 1960s, East Harlem black parents and concerned citizens initiated a move for community control of Intermediate School 201 in New York City. In June, 1967, three demonstration districts were created by the Board of Education. Later, 19 staff members of the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district were transferred. A 36-day teachers' strike was called by the United Federation of Teachers. Temporary suspension of the local governing boards was achieved. In March, 1968, a decentralization plan based on the Bundy Plan* emerged. It involved the creation of 30 to 40 districts, each with its own community board of education; a central board of education to consist of seven members, five to be elected from each borough and two selected by the Mayor. Registered voters and parents of students enrolled in schools in the districts could elect local school boards which could hire local superintendents and principals. The 1969 legislative session abolished the three experimental school districts and took control over personnel, budget, curriculum materials, evaluation and installation of new programs from the local boards. Further, local boundaries could

be adjusted at will. At present, there are 32 community districts comprising elementary and junior high schools. High schools, however, are still under the jurisdiction of the city school board. Here again we see a recurring phenomena: the inability or unwillingness of the power structure to give up its power to the poor community.

Some blacks, recognizing that a white strategy which insisted that all public educational institutions adhere strictly to white demands meant that blacks would no be educated correctly, withdrew from the struggle. They became determined to fight the battle on another front. These blacks saw the crisis in public education and employed various tactics to cope with the problem: demonstrations, intermittent rebellion, round table discussions, debates, political maneuvers, and other kinds of strategies, all of which proved to be ineffective against the racial intransigence of whites. As a consequence, some blacks turned away from public education and established alternative schools principally financed by blacks.

Between the years 1969 and 1971, more than 62 black alternative educational institutions came into being. Of principal concer to these new educationists was the cooperative community planning and building of alternative schools for black protection. At stake, they stressed, was the survival and liberation of blacks which was possible only through the transmission of black values and the removal of the indoctrination of a colonized mentality. This was a necessary step inward for blacks in an effort to build a more positive self-image, and to gather their strength in order to move more equitably with other groups in American society. Only time will tell if this effort to establish alternative black schools was successful in providing quality education.

Resurgence of Desegregation

We must also ask the question: how successful has been the push for integration via busing or any other means? Is it really the black majorities' choice for equality of educational opportunity?

An NEA Task Force III survey conducted in 75 school districts in Louisiana and Mississippi during January and February of 1970 revealed that a disproportionately large number of black principals had been demoted to lower level positions; many were demoted to administrative assistants, assistant visiting teacher or classroom teachers. Others were discharged on trumped up charges or told they lacked sufficient knowledge of teaching, despite the fact that the majority of black principals had superior academic qualifications to their white counterparts. Few of these newly-created positions to which the black principals were assigned had any authority, unlike the newly-created titles for whites of curriculum supervisor, area principal, supervising principal, and curriculum coordinator. Central office positions given to blacks were frustratingly lacking in decision-making authority. They encompassed such inane titles as supervisor of child welfare and attendance, instructional materials supervisor, assistant director of federal programs, and community relations advisor. Teachers suffered a similar fate, some through outright dismissals and the contracts of others simply weren't renewed.

It should be obvious to any reader of the NEA report, *School Desegregation: Louisiana and Mississippi*, that public education in the South deteriorated, in many instances, to non-education for black students. Laws that were designed obstensibly to correct inequities were twisted to perpetuate racist behavior on the part of the controlling white interests. White resistance to desegregation had a particularly damaging effect on the black community. Blacks lost at least 31,000 teaching and administration jobs in the South, through dismissals, demotions, or displacement, and it is estimated that approximately $200 million was lost to black communities as a result. Still, blacks were unshaken in their belief that education was the key to equality in America.

In the school year 1972-73, more than seven of every ten black children in the North were attending majority black public schools, and the greatest number of children were in schools that were 80% or more black. In the same year, five out of every ten black children in the 11 southern states attended majority black schools. This indicates that public schools in the South have become more integrated than the North. And through all of this confusion and chaos, black children continue to learn and black parents continue to cling to education as the key to success.

In summary, we must ask the question: why have blacks clung to their faith in education despite all the hardships they have encountered since they were brought to America's shores? Obviously, this tenacious hold on an ideal which has caused such pain to black adults and their children stems from our African heritage of the love of knowledge manifested in our temple-building in Thebes, our invention of writing in Memphis, and our education institution building in Timbuktu. Throughout our over 300 years of oppression in America, we have never ceased our struggle for the attainment of quality education. It is indeed phenomenal that our faith in education has never wavered, so that even today, black educators struggle against the inflexibility of the age-graded curricula, methodology and authoritarian administrative postures which place black children at a distinct disadvantage in terms of life's opportunities. Blacks themselves have played a major role in obtaining educational opportunities for black people, and today's black educator is a continuing part of that tradition.

Black colleges have produced most of the black leaders who took to the platforms to speak against the denial of equality of educational opportunities to all blacks. Through extensive research and scholarly writings, black educators have given invaluable testimony and support to the concept of quality education.

After 200 years, the pursuit of education is still a dominant force in our lives. A little more than a century ago, it was illegal to teach slaves to read and write and today black people are still struggling to enjoy the basic right to a quality education that all other Americans enjoy. As America observes the 200th anniversary of its birth, it would do well to ponder this fact.

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